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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 28, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable GIL GUTKNECHT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. McDevitt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed bills and a concurrent resolution of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 833. An act to designate the Federal building courthouse at Public Square and Superior Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio, as the "Howard M. Metzenbaum United States Courthouse";

S. 1000. An act to designate the United States courthouse at 500 State Avenue in Kansas City, Kansas, as the "Robert J. Dole United States Courthouse";

S. 1043. An act to designate the United States courthouse under construction at the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Clark Avenue in Las Vegas, Nevada, as the "Lloyd D. George United States Courthouse"; and

S. Con. Res. 43. Concurrent resolution urging the United States Trade Representative immediately to take all appropriate action with regards to Mexico's imposition of antidumping duties on United States high fructose corn syrup.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by

the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. VISCLOSKY] for 5 minutes.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, the most important thing that we can do for our children and their children is to balance the Federal budget. Unfortunately, I fear that we will snatch defeat from the jaws of victory by enacting expensive new tax cuts before the budget is actually balanced.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me that the best tax cut we can give to the American people is to balance the Federal budget. It has been shown that by balancing the budget we can stimulate economic growth and reduce interest rates on everything from home mortgages to car loans. Keeping these considerations in mind, I firmly believe that we must resist the destructive idea of granting tax cuts at this time.

There is little question that we have made tremendous progress in reducing the deficit in the past 5 years. From a record high of \$290 billion in 1992, projections cited last week indicate that the deficit may fall below \$45 billion by the end of this year.

Unfortunately, this body missed a golden opportunity last week to make sure that we would finally reach a balanced budget by the year 2002. By rejecting a commonsense measure that would have applied enforcement procedures to the budget resolution, both parties put other interests above that of balancing the budget. This raises serious questions about a real willingness to make the tough choices needed to get us to a balanced budget.

Given the failure of the House to enact enforcement legislation, it is now more important than ever to keep our eyes on the goal of balancing the budget and finishing the job. Achieving this goal can only happen one step at a time. The first step should be to reduce spending by reforming entitlement programs.

With America's population aging and people living longer, the number of beneficiaries in programs such as Medicare is growing much faster than the working population. For this reason, Medicare and other entitlement programs are projected to run out of money early in the next century unless we make basic reforms to these programs right now.

Secondly, if no changes are made to Medicare and other spending programs, all the progress we have made in reducing the deficit will be in vain.

It should also be pointed out that the enormous growth of entitlement spending is threatening the discretionary programs that allow us to invest in the future of this country. Estimates from the Congressional Budget Office show that by the year 2002 mandatory spending will consume 70 percent of the Federal budget.

We depend on discretionary programs for building roads, putting more police officers on the street, and making our economy more productive. We must use the opportunity before us to slow the growth of mandatory spending and achieve a more sustainable balance.

While cutting spending is the first step in balancing the budget, I believe we will take a giant leap backward if we compound our current fiscal problems by granting significant new tax cuts that will increase the deficit. Studies show that the cost of the tax bill approved by the House on June 26 is heavily backloaded, hiding the bill's true cost and threatening to unbalance

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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